



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO  
THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
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**Testimony Supporting Senate Bill No. 1009**

**AN ACT CONCERNING MINOR AND TECHNICAL CHANGES TO  
THE OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT RELATED STATUTES**

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Co-Chairs Cassano and McCarthy Vahey, Ranking Members Champagne and Zawistowski and distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of S.B. 1009, An Act Concerning Minor and Technical Changes to Office of Policy and Management Related Statutes.

The proposed bill impacts certain statutory responsibilities of the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) as follows:

**Section 1. Subsections (c) and (d) of section 7-325 – Special Taxing Districts**

- Involves special taxing districts within municipalities for specific purposes, i.e., fire control, sewers, flood or erosion control, water, garbage collection.
- Annual reports from the district clerk to the town clerk are eliminated and such reports would only be required when the charter or special act of the district is changed.
- Beginning on October 1, 2019, and annually thereafter, the district must report certain financial information to OPM (mill rate and tax levy) which is data needed for municipal aid calculations. This is the same reporting requirement for tax collectors. **NOTE:** The October 1 date (line 27) should be changed to July 1, to meet OPM's reporting deadline. Also, it is not the clerk of the district who submits the statement, it is the treasurer or tax collector of the district. So, lines 28 and 32 should be amended to delete the reference to the clerk.

- No additional burden or financial impact on municipalities.

## **Section 2. Subsection (b) of section 12-81g – Additional Veterans’ Income**

- Clarifies what is considered as income for a veteran to qualify for the additional veterans’ exemption.
- Assessors use adjusted gross income for calculating the additional veterans’ exemption.
- This section, which deals with a benefit to veterans that have a 100% disability rating, has language that considers additional income. If the current definition is enforced, veterans would lose the benefit as Assessors would need to include additional income (i.e., Social Security), which may put them over the limits.
- This change would make the treatment of veterans with 100% disability consistent with the additional veterans’ exemption.
- This is a municipal option. Municipalities can determine if they want to provide an additional benefit to 100% disabled veterans.

## **Section 3. Section 12-81cc – Additional Veterans’ Exemption**

- Under existing law, nine (9) exemptions for veterans are portable. The veteran may obtain the exemption from one municipality, and if they move during the tax year, the municipality to which they move must honor their eligibility.
- The additional exemption for eligible veterans is currently not transferrable. The new language would allow additional veterans eligibility to transferable between municipalities, making it consistent with the other nine (9) exemptions for veterans.
- The portability of a veteran’s tax relief would require a municipality to pick up the liability for the additional tax relief originally granted by another municipality. The overall impact on any municipality is negligible.

## **Section 4. Subdivision (2) of subsection (a) of section 12-170e – Renter’s Rebate**

- Technical change to replace Commissioner of Housing with Secretary of OPM to conform to current practice.



## **Section 5. Subsection (a) of section 12-170f – Renter’s Rebate**

- Eliminates language that allows for an extension of time to apply for the renter’s rebate.
- There is a six month period each year, April 1 – October 1, for a renter to apply for a rebate on the rent paid in the previous calendar year. The law also allows for the renter to apply to OPM by December 15 for an extension of this application period due to illness or incapacitation.
- Under existing law, OPM is required certify that a renter is eligible for the rebate by October 15 and payments of rebates must be made by October 30.
- The program has a fixed amount of funding that must be divided up among eligible renters each year
- Due to the applications for extension, OPM cannot calculate the aggregate number of rebates that will be granted and therefore, must hold back \$200,000 to \$300,000 to cover rebates which may be granted on the extended applications.
- As a result, the renters that did apply during the six (6) month application period receive a decreased benefit.
- Elimination of the ability to extend the six (6) month application period will benefit those that have applied in a timely fashion, and will be smoother for OPM to administer as resources have decreased.

## **Section 6. Subsections (a) and (b) of section 16a-31**

- OPM is required to report annually to the Continuing Legislative Committee on State Planning and Development on the implementation of the State Plan of Conservation and Development and the extent to which state actions are in conformity with such Plan.
- OPM’s 2018 report cited the challenges it faces in fulfilling this reporting requirement in a meaningful manner. Notably, state agencies, in complying with the requirements of CGS Section 16a-31(a), typically make their own determinations of consistency without seeking an advisory statement from OPM.
- As a result, without any direct input into an agency’s determination of consistency, it is not possible for OPM to accurately report on the extent to which the agency action is in conformity with the Plan.

- This proposal would make it mandatory for state agencies to request, and for OPM to provide, an advisory statement only for actions that are subject to the early public scoping process outlined in CGS Section 22a-1b of the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA).
- Such advisory statements will provide the information needed for OPM to fulfill its annual reporting requirement under CGS Section 16a-32(c), while also helping to ensure that any inter-agency concerns associated with a particular state agency-sponsored action are addressed in advance of the CEPA public scoping process.

#### **Section 7. Subsection (a) of section 19a-308 – Neglected Cemetery Fund**

- The purpose of the fund is to provide funding to care for neglected cemeteries, which are typically historic burial places.
- In most municipalities the responsibility is given to a cemetery association, regardless of whether funding is available.
- The bill removes the language “under the control or maintenance of a cemetery association” to include all neglected cemeteries.
- Current law only allows for the straightening of memorial stones, but not for repair and restoration.
- **NOTE:** New language should also allow the funding to be used for “repair and restoration” of the memorial stones, in addition to the stones being “straightened” (end of line 156).

I respectfully request that you support S.B. 1009, which will update and streamline a number of areas that OPM oversees.

Again, I would like to again thank the Committee for the opportunity to present this testimony.